A

SERMON

Preached to the

SOCIETIES

FOR

Reformation of Manners,

AT

St. *Mary-le-Bow*,

ON

Tueſday *January* the 5*th*, 1730.

By the Right Reverend Father in GOD,

FRANCIS Lord Biſhop of St. *Aſaph*.

LONDON,

Printed for Jos. DOWNING, in *Bartholomew-Cloſe* near *Weſt-Smithfield*. 1731.

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PROV. xiv. 34.

Righteouſneſs exalteth a Nation: but Sin is a Reproach to any People.

THE two Aſſertions contained in theſe Words have ſuch a foundation in the reaſon of things, that tho' they are well worthy the Wiſdom of the wiſeſt Man, they want no Authority to convince us of the truth of them. That Righteouſneſs or Vertue is neceſſary to exalt a Nation, to make it flouriſh in Proſperity and Glory; and that Sin or Vice, on the other hand, is a reproach to a People, and deſtructive of their Happineſs, and will, if ſuffered to prevail, in the end prove the Ruin of them, are Truths that may eaſily be demonſtrated, and with the greateſt certainty, from the eſſential Characters and natural Tendencies of Virtue and Vice, compared with the deſign and end and nature of Society. For what is a Society, but a body of People joined together by juſt

and righteous Laws? And what are juſt and righteous Laws, but Obligations on the Members of the Society to live virtuouſly? When therefore the Members live up to thoſe Obligations, and obſerve the Laws, the Society, if rightly conſtituted, muſt needs flouriſh, ſince the end is anſwered for which it was at firſt formed. While the Laws are obſerved, the Society is true to itſelf, its Tranquillity and Happineſs will be maintained, nothing can diſturb it from within; nor will it eaſily be deſtroyed by any Foreign Force. But if a Society be falſe to itſelf, if the juſt and righteous Laws on which 'tis founded, are thrown down and trampled on, when Vice takes the Place of Virtue, Ruin and Deſtruction muſt needs enſue; it will be divided within itſelf, weakened by an infinite variety of domeſtick evils, and become an eaſy prey to every Invader from without.

But there is no need of any nice enquiry into the Principles and Nature of Society, or of thoſe things which either conſtitute, or are deſtructive of its Happineſs, in order to demonſtrate what is aſſerted in the Text. Experience abundantly confirms the Truth of both Parts of it. The gradual Riſe and Fall of Nations has been in proportion to the Prevalency of Virtue or Vice among them. As no Nation has long flouriſhed after it had abandoned the virtuous Conduct it was before formed for, ſo Vice is found to have been a certain forerunner of Ruin to People who have been univerſally infected with it. Nor can it be otherwiſe; Vice carries

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in it as ſure preſages of Deſtruction to the body Politick, as any the moſt fatal Symptoms can be of the death of a Natural Body. Theſe are known Truths, and what all Hiſtories atteſt. But thoſe who are unacquainted with the Hiſtories of Nations, thoſe whoſe views are not enough extended to take in ſuch large Objects as States and Kingdoms, and to conſider their Beginnings, Progreſs, Perfection, and decline, need only look into private Families, to ſee what influence Virtue and Vice, or which is the ſame thing, good and ill Government have upon them. For if the Fate of Families depends on theſe, that of Nations muſt do ſo too; for what is a Nation but a collection of Families united by Laws common to them? But the whole, the collective Body, can't thrive while the ſeveral Parts viſibly languiſh and decay; nor, on the contrary, can a Nation decline in its Glory, or be in danger of Ruin, while the conſtituent Parts are vigorous and ſtrong, and in a flouriſhing Condition. The whole is made up of the Parts, and therefore can't but ſhare in the ſame Fate with them.

THIS all wiſe Governours, all civilized Nations, have ſhewn themſelves ſufficiently ſenſible of, both by the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of the Laws in which their States were Originally founded, and by the penal Laws they have from time to time added, according to the Exigency of things, to puniſh Profaneneſs and Immorality, and thereby promote the Practice of Virtue and Religion. Governours in-

indeed have it greatly in their Power to encourage Virtue, by their favours to deſerving Men, and the rewards they have always in their hands; but the Laws can do it only by making Vice penal. But even that directly tends to promote Virtue, by obliging the Vicious to leave off their Vices, and by the protection thereby given to the Virtuous, who are by ſuch penal Laws not only ſecured from the contagion of Vice, but from the Miſchief they would be expoſed to from vicious Men, if unreſtrained.

But if this be ſo, if this be the ſenſe of all wiſe Governours, of all civilized Nations, which the Laws againſt Vice univerſally ſhew it is, how comes it to paſs that Vice every where ſo much abounds? Whence is it we feel ſo little effect from ſuch wholeſome and good Laws? How come Profaneneſs and Immorality, in all the Branches of them, to be ſo predominant, in defiance of all the Legiſlature has been able to do for the ſuppreſſion of them? The Reaſon of this is but too plain; the Laws cannot execute themſelves, they are but a dead Letter; and though they threaten ever ſo ſeverely, they threaten but in vain, unleſs thoſe in whom the executive Power is lodged give them Life, and make thoſe whom it concerns feel, that in their Hands they have their full energy and force, and can do all they threaten, and effectually inflict Penalties, if they can't prevent faults.

But if Magiſtrates can do this, if they can give Life to the Laws, and make them anſwer their end, why is not this done? Why are

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not Laws, on which the Welfare of Society ſo much depends, better executed? Why, when it is ſo much in the Power of the Magiſtrate to hinder it, do Profaneſs and Immorality ſo often go unpuniſhed? Becauſe Magiſtrates are *Men*; to make Government perfect, Governours ſhould not be of the ſame ſpecies with the Perſons governed, liable to all the ſame Infirmities, ſubject to the ſame Paſſions; they ſhould be Beings of a ſuperior Order, of more unſhaken Virtue, more exalted Faculties, and of greater Power. If thoſe who by a figure are called Shepherds, were as ſuperior in Nature to their Flocks, as the real Shepherd is to his, we might hope they would be as well governed. The Imperfections of humane Nature are ſo many and ſo great, that it is no wonder, a truly good Magiſtrate is no very common thing.

Some Men in their natural Tempers, tho' otherwiſe good and honeſt Men, are indolent and unactive, and will not be at the Trouble to underſtand the Powers they are intruſted with, much leſs duly to execute them. They have neither Eyes nor Ears to ſee Offences, or hear Complaints, they can't bear the ſight of a Conſtable or an Informer, 'tis a pain to them to be put upon Action, and they are as much afraid of an Offender, as an Offender can be of them. This Temper makes them on all occaſions decline their Duty by all the little Arts they can. But ſhould not ſuch Men conſider what they owe to their King and Country, who have a right to expect this Service from them, and to which when they en-

entred on their Office they did by the moſt ſacred tyes oblige themſelves? If they did not intend to quit their Indolence and love of Eaſe, they ſhould have declined a Charge they are ſo unequal to. But in Truth they owe this Service not only to the Publick, but themſelves; for how can they expect to have an undiſturb'd enjoyment of the Eaſe they are ſo fond of, an entire ſafety to their Perſons, and a quiet Poſſeſſion of their own Fortunes, if they will not contribute their part to preſerve the publick Peace, by uſing their beſt endeavours to prevent every thing that tends to the diſturbance of it, and by bringing Offenders to condign Puniſhment? Have they a right to the ſweets of Indolence and Eaſe? So have others. But ſhould this humor once prevail among the better Sort, ſhould they be content to let the things go their train, and the World be as wicked as it will; the lower part of the People would ſoon give them Reaſon to repent, and make them feel the Miſchiefs of unreſtrained Wickedneſs.

ANOTHER cauſe of Neglect in Magiſtrates, is want of Courage; they are ſenſible Vice ought to be reſtrained, but dare not exert themſelves for fear of giving Offence, and provoking Men who never want inclination to do Miſchief, and have no Principles to reſtrain them from it, when it is in their Power. Vice, they fear, has a ſtrong Party on its ſide, and wicked Men ſeldom are without their Confederates and Friends. But is not this a ſad Excuſe? Shall it be infamous in a private Soldier, much more in a commanding Officer, to betray a want of Courage,

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and deſert his Poſt, or behave ill in it, when his Country calls for his Service; and ſhall it be leſs ſo in the Civil Magiſtrate? A Soldier has no occaſion for Courage but in a time of War, and when he is upon Duty; but in the Magiſtrate courage is always wanted, he is always upon Duty, always in a ſtate of War againſt Profaneneſs and Immorality, and whatever may diſturb the publick Peace. Their Office will never ſuffer them to be off their Guard, the Publick demands their conſtant Attention, to promote its Service, and defend it from the worſt of Enemies, profane, vicious, lewd, immoral Men; whoſe wicked Practices hurt not themſelves only, a great many innocent and honeſt People ſuffer by them, and great Evils are derived from them upon the whole Community. For it is a great Miſtake to think, that lewd, vicious Men, are Enemies to none but themſelves; to think thus is extreme Weakneſs. The vicious Man is not only injurious to himſelf, by waſting his Subſtance in forbidden Pleaſures; he is injurious to all who have a right to Maintenance or Aſſiſtance from him, to his Family, to his Relations and Friends, and oftentimes to as many as he can prevail with to give him Credit; he ſquanders away even the Wages of his Servants, and waſtes the Subſtance of the honeſt Tradeſman; much leſs can his poor, diſtreſſed Fellow-Creatures expect the relief from him which as Men and Chriſtians they have a right to. But that is not all, when vicious Men have ruined themſelves by their expenſive Follies, will not their Vices put them upon any evil

Courſes, to ſupport their Extravagancies, and to ſupply the Wants they have reduced them to? Will not their Neceſſities tempt them to break thro' all the reſtraints of Laws? Will not extreme indigence ſoon grow extremely impudent, and put Men of ruined Fortunes, Men loſt to all ſenſe of Shame or Virtue, upon the worſt of Crimes? What can the Publick expect from ſuch Men? What has it not reaſon to fear from them, if they are not timely reſtrained, and hindred from ruining themſelves, that they may neither be under the Temptation, nor have it in their Power, to ruin others, or diſturb the publick Welfare? The Magiſtrate therefore ought to think himſelf in a continual State of War againſt vicious Men, who are neceſſarily Enemies to the Society; and nothing can excuſe the want of Courage, where there always is ſo much occaſion for it.

OTHER Magiſtrates are remiſs in the execution of their Office through an exceſs of Tenderneſs and Good-nature; they are full of Pity and Compaſſion to the Follies of young People, are willing to hope they will be reclaimed without Puniſhment; that it is their firſt Offence, or is only a Sally of Youth, and that they will in time be wiſer and take up. In ſhort, they are extremely unwilling to do a ſevere thing, or bring Offenders to Shame or Puniſhment. And there are Caſes, no doubt, where a tenderneſs towards young Offenders is very proper; but when it is carried to an Exceſs, this great appearance of good Nature, tho' it be ſincere, is no way becoming a prudent and good Magiſtrate. For why ſo much Tenderneſs for vicious

ous Men, and none for thoſe that ſuffer by them? Why ſo much compaſſion for ſingle Perſons, and none for the Society, which they are ſure is hurt by their Impunity? This ſavours much of Corruption, and looks like courting popularity, one of the worſt Principles a Magiſtrate can be infected with; for he that favours an Offender, obliges ſome body, and is ſure of Thanks from him and his Friends, and perhaps of ſomething more than Thanks; but he that does his Duty, directly obliges no body, receives no Thanks, much leſs Reward; the Publick in this reſpect is an ungrateful Maſter, nothing is to be got by its ſervice; if there were, I am apt to think, theſe mild good natured Men would ſoon be brought to think, ſome tenderneſs, ſome pity was due to the Society; and that it is really cruelty to the Publick, to have their tenderneſs and good nature lye all the other way.

BUT it is to be feared, this appearance of tenderneſs and good nature is many times inſincere, and a pretence only to cover a negligence that proceeds from a worſe cauſe, I mean the obnoxiouſneſs of Magiſtrates themſelves. They are guilty, perhaps notoriouſly ſo, of the faults they ought to puniſh; but with what Face can a Magiſtrate be ſevere upon others, while his Conſcience tells him, he deſerves to ſuffer the ſame ſeverity himſelf? And probably the World know it too; but if they do not, it is almoſt the ſame thing; wicked Men are very apt to ſuſpect others know the Crimes they are conſcious of themſelves. But if they are guilty, the ſame fault in them is not the ſame; their Station aggravates their

Offence; their Vices are more conſpicuous and more infectious, and therefore of worſe conſequence than in private Men, in proportion to the dignity and nature of their Office; which makes them in the eye of the World, and in the reaſon of things, more faulty than the Criminal that ſtands before them. But it is not ſhame only reſtrains ſuch Men from doing their Duty; 'tis their Intereſt to be remiſs; they find greatly their Account in it. They who would not be ſeverely cenſured themſelves, muſt not be forward to cenſure others. Vicious Magiſtrates therefore muſt reſolve to ſee as little as poſſible what is amiſs in others, that they may not hear of their own faults. This is the ſureſt way to purchaſe an indulgence for themſelves; no body is forward to be ſevere upon a good-natured Man; his Vices will not be narrowly looked into, they will be concealed, connived at, extenuated, or denyed; nothing of which a vigilant and ſtrict Magiſtrate can ever expect. This, I can't but fear, is the caſe of too many Magiſtrates; they are vicious themſelves, and therefore afraid to provoke; and good nature is the cover only under which they ſhelter themſelves, for doing their Duty no better.

SOME would inſinuate as a reaſon of neglect in ſome Magiſtrates, a cauſe much more blameable than any of the former, and that is, the love of unrighteous Gain, which tempts Men to ſell Juſtice, and make a Trade of the Powers committed to them. Inſtead of reſtraining the progreſs of Immorality by a vigorous execution of the Laws, they give a Licence to Sin, and protect

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the Perſons and Houſes they ſhould puniſh and ſuppreſs; they are in Fee with them, and are well paid for it. Men of this Character will wink hard, and be deaf to all Complaints, and diſcountenance every ſtep taken to diſturb the Tents of the ungodly; they muſt do ſo, 'tis their bargain, and a ſure revenue to them. This indeed is ſo infamous a part, that it is to be hoped no body is guilty of it, and that the ſurmiſes of this kind are ſurmiſes only, and without Foundation. For what a Creature muſt that Man be that is capable of ſo vile a Practice? How abandoned and loſt to all Principles, who can thus make Gain his God? What ſenſe has ſuch an one of an over-ruling Providence, or of a righteous Judge of the World, who can thus make a Trade of Sin, and under the colour of a Magiſtrate ſell himſelf to be a Factor for the Devil?

'Tis poſſible indeed the remiſneſs and neglect of Magiſtrates in not executing the Laws againſt Profaneneſs and Immorality may ſometimes proceed from a cauſe leſs ſcandalous than ſome of thoſe I have mentioned, but not leſs pernicious; and that is Party Rage and Malice. A Magiſtrate may be ſo weak in his zeal for Party, and be ſo far governed by that Paſſion, as to diſcourage all Complaints that come from Perſons he does not like. He may look on ſuch Men as preciſe and hypocritical, Men of falſe zeal, and Pretenders only to Reformation, and browbeat them upon every Occaſion, tho' their only Fault be, that they are for God and the King. But if ſuch Men were capable of a ſober thought, they would ſee the cauſe of Virtue is a common cauſe,

cauſe, and that he and his Party have the ſame Intereſt in it with thoſe he differs from; that Vice, if ſuffer'd to go unpuniſhed, will in its conſequences reach them as well as others, and that all without diſtinction of Party will feel the effects of thoſe Evils, that hurt or diſturb the publick Welfare.

THESE are the Cauſes that may, tho' not all with the ſame degree of probability, be aſſigned for the ſhameful neglect of too many Magiſtrates in putting the Laws in execution againſt Vice and Immorality. But were the cauſes of theſe Laws not being better executed ſolely in the Magiſtrates, there would then be a remedy at hand. The Evil might in great Meaſure be removed by a prudent and careful Choice. If none were put into Commiſſion, but Men of Honour, Virtue and Integrity, who had Skill and Courage, Inclination and Ability to do their Duty, and who had a true ſenſe of what they owed to God, to the King, and their Country, we might reaſonably expect a great reformation in Affairs, and a vigorous Execution of the Laws. But Men, tho' wiſe and honeſt, and full of zeal for the cauſe of Virtue, would be *Men* ſtill, and would ſucceed but in part, for want of the Powers neceſſary to ſuppreſs Vice fully and effectually. 'Tis but very little Magiſtrates can do upon view, or upon their own knowledge; they can know only as they are informed, nor puniſh but upon good Proof and full Evidence. But how difficult is that to be had? Men are apt enough to complain of the Growth of Vice, and of the neglect

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of Magiſtrates; but when they find one willing to do his Duty, are thoſe who are loudeſt in their Complaints, the moſt ready to aſſiſt him? Will they appear as Witneſſes, and give Evidence, or do any one thing neceſſary for the conviction of Offenders? Nothing leſs; many whoſe Mouths are full of the Iniquity of the times, will themſelves contribute not a little to it; but few, very few will lend a Hand to mend things, and enable the Magiſtrate to do, what with ſo much ſeeming concern they expect he ſhould.

THE Reaſons of this inconſiſtent conduct, of this backwardneſs to aſſiſt the Magiſtrate, are in the main the ſame that have been aſſigned for the neglect of Magiſtrates themſelves, and therefore need not be repeated. But there are others, one eſpecially, and that the moſt conſiderable, peculiar to this caſe; which therefore it is of the greateſt importance to the cauſe of Virtue to remove. To look into the Lives and Actions of others, to bring to light the Works of Darkneſs, to be a Witneſs, to give Evidence, to be an Accuſer or a Proſecutor, is to be an *Informer:* Which is ſuch an ill-ſounding Word, that good Men are diſcouraged by it from doing what otherwiſe Reaſon and Conſcience tell they ought to do.

BUT whence comes the Name of *Informer* to be ſo odious, when the Word in it ſelf is of a middle Nature, neither good nor bad, but as it is uſed? And if we look into the thing, we ſhall find there is nothing in it, when rightly underſtood, that a wiſe and good Man ought to be aſhamed of. If, to ſay nothing of Religion, the ſuppreſſion of Vice is for the good of the Community,

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as moſt undeniably it is, then whatever tends to that, is for the good of the Community alſo; whatever is proper and neceſſary to ſo good an end, is it ſelf good, it can't be bad. Whence then is it that the word *Informer* has ſo ill a ſound? Chiefly perhaps from hence, that the vicious part of Mankind, who are not a ſmall party, find greatly their account in it; it highly concerns them to diſcourage Informations, that they may go on ſecure and undiſturbed in their wicked Courſes; which they could not long do, if Informations ſhould grow into Faſhion, and become reputable. Here then is a ſtrong party, and commonly a very loud and noiſy one, always ready to raiſe an outcry againſt *Informers*, be the caſe never ſo juſtifiable, or even commendable. But beſides this, many things have in fact contributed to make the Name odious. There is in many People an impertinent Officiouſneſs, that makes them delight in Tale-bearing and carrying little Stories, which oftentimes do a world of miſchief, and create ſuſpicions and diviſions among the beſt Friends, when there is little or no cauſe for it, were the caſe truly underſtood. The peace of private Families is often thus diſturbed; circles of Acquaintances are frequently infeſted with them; and it were well the Evil would ſtop there, it enters into Kings Palaces; little People hope to make a Merit of this Officiouſneſs, but thoſe that make their Court this way to Perſons of great Minds, get nothing by it but the Contempt and Hatred they deſerve.

But farther, many Laws, that concern not Virtue or Vice, but relate wholly to Trade and Com-

Commerce, as they puniſh the Offenders with forfeiture of Goods, or a pecuniary Penalty, or both; ſo to promote Diſcoveries, they give a certain part to the Perſons informing. This in all times has created Multitudes of *Informers*, among the meaner ſort, who are very buſy and forward in making Diſcoveries for the ſake of what they are to get by them. The low Condition and the mean Circumſtances of theſe People have greatly helped to make the Name of *Informer* odious. For their Poverty tempts them to uſe many little Artifices, to play Tricks, and accuſe falſely; and they are ſometimes found to be themſelves Perſons of ill Character. And tho' there be nothing of this in their Caſe, their Information proceeds not from a publick Spirit, or a concern for Trade, and the good of their Country; what they do is wholly to ſerve their own little Intereſts.

But what has contributed moſt to make the Name of *Informer* odious, are the ſecret Informations given in Affairs of a criminal Nature relating to the State. In abſolute and arbitrary Governments, and ſuch moſt have been that fill our Hiſtories, Informations have been encouraged in the moſt ſhameful Manner, and againſt Perſons of the greateſt Rank and Merit, and that becauſe they were ſo. The *Roman* Hiſtory under ſome of their Emperors is infamous in this reſpect beyond all Imagination. Informations were given of Crimes of the higheſt Nature, and the Parties accuſed condemned to Confiſcation or Baniſhment, and often Death, without knowing their Accuſers, or the Facts diſtinctly, they were accuſed of, which made it impoſſible for them to vindicate

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But farther, many Laws, that concern not Virtue or Vice, but relate wholly to Trade and Com-

Commerce, as they puniſh the Offenders with forfeiture of Goods, or a pecuniary Penalty, or both; ſo to promote Diſcoveries, they give a certain part to the Perſons informing. This in all times has created Multitudes of *Informers*, among the meaner ſort, who are very buſy and forward in making Diſcoveries for the ſake of what they are to get by them. The low Condition and the mean Circumſtances of theſe People have greatly helped to make the Name of *Informer* odious. For their Poverty tempts them to uſe many little Artifices, to play Tricks, and accuſe falſely; and they are ſometimes found to be themſelves Perſons of ill Character. And tho' there be nothing of this in their Caſe, their Information proceeds not from a publick Spirit, or a concern for Trade, and the good of their Country; what they do is wholly to ſerve their own little Intereſts.

But what has contributed moſt to make the Name of *Informer* odious, are the ſecret Informations given in Affairs of a criminal Nature relating to the State. In abſolute and arbitrary Governments, and ſuch moſt have been that fill our Hiſtories, Informations have been encouraged in the moſt ſhameful Manner, and againſt Perſons of the greateſt Rank and Merit, and that becauſe they were ſo. The *Roman* Hiſtory under ſome of their Emperors is infamous in this reſpect beyond all Imagination. Informations were given of Crimes of the higheſt Nature, and the Parties accuſed condemned to Confiſcation or Baniſhment, and often Death, without knowing their Accuſers, or the Facts diſtinctly, they were accuſed of, which made it impoſſible for them to vindicate

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their Innocence, however unjuſt the charge againſt them was. As abſolute Governments are very frequently oppreſſive ones, and lodged in ill Hands, Informations have been countenanced by Princes, which themſelves knew to be falſe; nay, they have condeſcended to be themſelves the Contrivers of them, when they could not otherwiſe come at the Eſtate or Life they wanted to take away. Indeed tyrannical and oppreſſive Governours do themſelves often believe, when there is no ground for it; for Tyranny, in the the nature of it, is always fearful, and Fear, when 'tis violent, never reaſons; ſo that the moſt improbable reports of Conſpiracies and Plots are as eaſily believed as the moſt credible. Thus it is in abſolute Governments; and in unquiet Times, all other Governments are too apt to ſwarm with falſe Informers.

THESE are the things that have in all times made the Name of *Informer* odious, and frightned well-meaning People from ſtrengthning the hands of the Magiſtrate, and contributing their part towards a due Execution of the Laws, by giving the neceſſary Informations, tho' they know that without theſe the Power of the Magiſtrate is almoſt as uſeleſs and unactive as the Laws themſelves would be without Magiſtrates. But could Men diſtinguiſh a little, and raiſe their Minds above vulgar Prejudices, they would ſee this point in quite another light. When Information is given to a Magiſtrate againſt profane and immoral Practices, from an honeſt Heart, that fears God and loves his Neighbour, when it ſtands clear of all imputations that can in the leaſt blemiſh it, when it is not done for reward or to get

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Money by it, when it proceeds not from perſonal Pique or Revenge, but from diſintereſted Views, and a real concern for the Publick good, and even for the Party offending, when it is not made in Secret and in the Dark, but dares to come into the open Light, and he that makes it is ready not only to accuſe, but to prove, what has ſuch an Information in it that is odious beſides the Name? Let then honeſt Men conſider how wrong it is to be aſhamed of what they not only believe, but know to be right, and not only right, but highly uſeful, nay, abſolutely neceſſary for the Publick Good, and the Honour of Almighty God, both which they are under the ſtrongeſt Obligations to promote. Not to do ſo when they can, is a manifeſt breach of Duty; next to the fault of concealing Offenders, is not to diſcover them. What is right, what is uſeful, what is neceſſary for the honour of God and the good of our Country, what our Duty to both requires of us, can never be mean or diſhonourable, much leſs odious. As little as Men like the Name of *Informer*, there are Caſes in which all will agree in their approbation of it. Who, for example, ever thought it unbecoming a Man of the niceſt Honour to inform againſt a Highway-Man, a Street-Robber, or a Houſe-breaker? Who at this time does not think it not only commendable, but the Duty of every honeſt Man, to inform againſt thoſe Monſters who ſet up for Incendiaries? This plainly ſhews there are caſes, in which to inform is ſo far from being mean or diſhonourable, that it is confeſſedly, highly honourable and praiſe-worthy. But if it be ſo in any caſe, it is certainly in this, which endea-

vours the Suppreſſion of Profaneneſs and Immorality, than which nothing can tend more to the Preſervation of the Community, nothing more to its Proſperity and Glory.

THESE, I apprehend, are the chief Obſtacles why the Laws we are ſpeaking of are not better executed. The Magiſtrate, for one Reaſon or other, is not oftentimes ſo willing to do his part as he ſhould be, and if he had Will, he wants Power; he can't puniſh without Proof, and Proof even in flagitious Caſes is not eaſy to be had. No Body is willing to inform and make himſelf an Evidence, chiefly becauſe the Word *Informer* has an ill ſound; they are likewiſe diſcouraged by the Trouble and Expence a Proſecutor muſt be at, and are not ſure they ſhall not be brow-beaten for it by the Magiſtrate. And in that Caſe, what do all their Endeavours to ſerve their Country end in? Their Time and Pains and Charges are not only all loſt, but the Shame that ſhould be brought on the Offenders is moſt unjuſtly turned upon themſelves, and Vice, inſtead of the Puniſhment due to it, goes off triumphant.

THESE Conſiderations make it extremely difficult to perſwade even good Men to do their Duty in this Point, notwithſtanding its great uſefulneſs. But the more difficult this is, the greater Thanks are due to the worthy Members of the Societies here aſſembled, who have the Virtue, the Senſe, the Courage, to deſpiſe vulgar Prejudices, and are ready at all Hazards, and under all Inconveniencies, to detect profane and vicious Men, in order to bring them to condign Puniſhment. They ſhew the World,

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they are fully ſenſible, they can't do their Country a greater Service, than by promoting the Practice of Virtue and Religion, the only true Cement of Society. To promote therefore a Cauſe in which the Publick is ſo deeply intereſted, they are content to ſacrifice their Time and Eaſe; they grudge not either the Trouble or Expence it gives them, nor do they value the Calumnies or Clamours of their Adverſaries, they know themſelves to be above Reproach. And whatever Succeſs they may have in reforming others, they can't poſſibly give a greater proof of their own Piety and Goodneſs; they have put themſelves under a Neceſſity of being ſtrictly Virtuous, ſince otherwiſe they could not fail to draw upon themſelves the ſevereſt Cenſures. They know they have always Eyes upon them, Eyes the moſt piercing and ſharp-ſighted, Enemies that will pry into their moſt ſecret Actions, and would proclaim the ſmalleſt failure on the Houſe-tops. Men who are at this open Defiance with all the vicious part of Mankind, and by their Actions bid them do their worſt, ſuch Men ſhew they are conſcious, they have nothing to fear or be aſhamed of. They are ſafe in their own Integrity againſt all the Attacts of evil Tongues; their Cauſe is the cauſe of Virtue; they have the ſame Enemies, and I hope will always have the ſame Friends; they have a right to the Eſteem and Praiſe and Thanks of wiſe and good Men, who are the only valuable part of Mankind; and if they could poſſibly fail of this part of their Reward, they know they are engaged in the Cauſe of a good and gracious God, who is able and wil-

willing amply to recompence thoſe who are faithful in his Service.

But it is not Virtue or Courage only they have ſhewn, but great Prudence alſo; 'twas very prudent in Men ſo well diſpoſed, to form themſelves into Societies at firſt, by which they are ſecured againſt the Inconveniencies that ſingle Perſons would in ſuch a Work have been unavoidably expoſed to. Single Perſons could not have ſtood their Ground againſt the Combinations of the Wicked; they could not have born the vexatious Trouble, and the great Expence, that confederate Vice would infallibly have brought upon them; they would have ſunk under the load of Calumny and Slander, that would daily have been vented by falſe Lips, and lying Tongues. Nay, their Perſons would not have been ſafe, their Lives would have been perpetually in danger, either by open Violence, or by Perjury and Subornation. Theſe Difficulties the Projectors of theſe Societies wiſely foreſaw, and for that reaſon formed them. And as this ſhews that in the firſt Formation of theſe Societies, Virtue and Prudence met together, ſo the Rules laid down for the Regulation of them ſhew the ſame; and the Execution of thoſe Rules that has been all along obſerved is a manifeſt Proof, that the ſame Prudence ſtill guides them. For 'tis now about Forty years that theſe Societies have been on foot; during which Time we are ſure ill Men have not wanted Inclination to find fault where ther e was none, and to magnifie every the leaſt Miſcarriage or ill conduct, even in the loweſt Perſon employed in them; and yet how little has all the Charge amounted to, they have pretended

tended to bring in ſo many Years? All the dark Deſigns of the Evil one have been in vain; theſe Societies maintain their ground, and will do ſo, and all the attempts of their Enemies to hurt them are in the end ſo many Panegyricks, and the ſureſt Proofs, their Conduct is above reproach.

SOME indeed, who don't think fit openly to oppoſe theſe Societies, or directly to cenſure the Deſign of them, would indirectly wound them by inſinuating that they are uſeleſs and unneceſſary. And for a Proof of this, they appeal to the great Prevalence of Vice, and that Profaneneſs and Immorality increaſe upon us rather than loſe ground, notwithſtanding all the Endeavours of theſe Societies for ſo many Years. And it may be true that Vice has viſibly increaſed of late Years, but that will not prove that theſe Societies have not been of great uſe. Profaneneſs and Irreligion, Luxury and Lewdneſs, an univerſal Libertiniſm and licentiouſneſs of Manners may have appeared in the Lives of many to a terrible degree; but are the middling People, the lower Orders of Men, more vicious than they were formerly? If they are not, the Objection affects not theſe Societies, for it is to theſe latter ſort chiefly, if not wholly, they confine themſelves; theſe are the Men they endeavour to reform, upon whoſe Induſtry and Virtue the Strength and the Riches of the Nation ſo much depend. As for thoſe of ſuperiour Rank, if the advantages of a liberal Education, a ſenſe of Honour, a regard to what they owe to their own Families, the Dignity of their Station, the great Intereſt themſelves have in the Welfare of their Country, their Duty

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to the King, the beauty and reaſonableneſs of Virtue, the ſolemn Engagements they are under as Chriſtians, and a concern for their own Immortal Souls, if theſe Motives will not prevail with them to abſtain from Vice, they muſt go on, and be vicious ſtill; the Societies for Reformation of Manners are not to blame; they leave them where they found them, to their own Conſciences, to the Laws, to the Superior Magiſtrates, and to the high Diſpleaſure and Diſcountenance of the Sovereign Power God has ſet over them, *For the Praiſe of them that do well, and for the Puniſhment of evil Doers.* If the People of lower Condition are at all reformed, the Societies are juſtified. Nay, could an Eſtimate be made, and upon the whole it ſhould be found that they are not reformed, even then theſe Societies cannot be blamed, or juſtly repreſented as uſeleſs and inſignificant. For who can ſay, Things would not have been a great deal worſe, bad as they are, if theſe Societies had not interpoſed? I think it very certain they would. For what can reſtrain Vice, if making Men uneaſy in it, and the bringing them to Shame and Puniſhment will not? But this the Societies have done in innumerable Inſtances. I am not inſenſible that many of theſe diſorderly and lewd Creatures, after they have ſuffer'd the Law, will be apt to return again to their old Trade, partly tempted to it by their own Luſts, and partly from the Difficulty they are under of getting a Livelihood in an honeſt way. But yet what the Societies do in this Affair, is all that can be done; and if Vice is not more effectually ſuppreſſed, the Fault is not in them, but in the Laws. But it is to be

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hoped, not a few of the Men at leaſt are reclaimed by this Method, and young Offenders of the other Sex, who are not yet ſo far gone into Wickedneſs as to be paſt all Shame and ſenſe of Virtue; others will be deterred from taking the ſame ill Courſes, when they ſee by the Numbers brought to Puniſhment how unſafe it is; and thoſe who will not be reclaimed, can't do ſo much Miſchief, or debauch ſo many as they would do, if they were ſuffered to go on unmoleſted. Theſe Societies therefore muſt in juſtice to them be allowed to have been very uſeful to the Publick in bringing ſuch Numbers of lewd and vicious Creatures to puniſhment. 'Tis a very great ſervice to the Offenders themſelves, if by this means they are brought to a true Senſe of their Follies, and are prevailed on to betake themſelves to better Courſes. Such Men have great reaſon to thank thoſe whom God was pleaſed to make the happy Inſtruments to recover them from the fatal Vices they were engaged in; they owe to them all the Comfort of their future Lives. Had not their Eyes been thus opened to ſee the Danger they were in, they might have ſpent all their Days in Poverty and Infamy, and at laſt died as they lived, in an utter inſenſibility of the ſad Condition they are in; or from a ſenſe of their great guilt under all the torments of deſpair. But whether the Perſons thus reclaimed be few or many, every degree of incapacity the wicked are put under, of corrupting others, is a great ſervice done to thoſe who would otherwiſe have been ſeduced by them; and the number of theſe is probably much greater than of the other. The good that is done of this kind, makes no noiſe indeed, but is not therefore the leſs valuable. Could thoſe whoſe Innocence

nocence and Virtue have been preſerved by the interpoſition of theſe Societies from the Snares laid for them, be ſenſible of the eſcape they have had, how thankful would themſelves, their Parents and Friends be both to God and Man for it? But this muſt have been the caſe of great Numbers, tho' themſelves be ignorant whence it is, that they have not been *led into Temptation.* Now all who are by theſe means either reclaimed from vicious Courſes, or are prevented from falling into them, are ſo many proofs of the good effects of theſe Societies, and of the ſervice done by them to the Publick.

But the moſt uſeful part of their Deſigns for Reformation, in my humble Opinion, are their Endeavours to ſuppreſs Houſes of ill Fame, Night-Houſes, Gaming-Houſes, thoſe Neſts of Lewdneſs, and all ſorts of Vice. And we may hope for an unuſual ſucceſs in their Endeavours of this kind from the Countenance and encouragement given them by a ſett of very worthy Magiſtrates, to whom great Thanks are due for the Service they have done their Country by concurring ſo heartily with thoſe who are engaged in this part of a Reformation. Experience but too much ſhews how eaſy 'tis for Magiſtrates when they have a mind to it, to make excuſes for not acting in ſupport of a good Cauſe with Diligence and Vigor; they may pretend Engagements, Buſineſs, Age, ill Health, or any thing for not doing what they ſhould; it requires no great dexterity or skill to diſcountenance Complaints, and render them ineffectual; they may be difficult in admitting Evidence, and confound a modeſt Witneſs with Chicanry and Captiouſneſs; in ſhort, they may eaſily, if ill diſpoſed, defeat the Work of Reformation.

WHAT Praiſe then do not theſe Magiſtrates deſerve, who, in a juſt Senſe of their Duty, faithfully diſcharge the Truſt repoſed in them, and gladly employ the Powers they are inveſted with, to the beſt Purpoſes? who ſhew themſelves true Guardians of the Laws, and ſhrink not from their Duty when the cauſe of Virtue calls for it; they will not permit, much leſs contrive, that it ſhould ſuffer in their Hands. They willingly give their Time and Attendance where 'tis wanted; they meet early and ſit long, that they may go thro' the Buſineſs before them, and give all the Support they can to ſo good a Cauſe as that of Reformation, nothing diſcouraged by the Numbers or the Inſolence of Offenders. On the contrary, they make them feel, by the Steadineſs, Integrity and Conſtancy they act with, that they are unalterably determined to promote to the utmoſt of their Power, a Work ſo neceſſary for the Honour of God and the welfare of their Country. It were to be wiſhed, a ſett of ſuch worthy Magiſtrates would look out for Men of the ſame virtuous Principles, of the ſame Integrity and Courage with themſelves, to be added to their Number. This would not only make the Buſineſs more eaſy, but add Credit and Strength to their Proceedings, and make the Wicked deſpair of Impunity, which they are too apt to flatter themſelves with from their Numbers, when they ſee but few in Authority willing to encounter them.

NOR can I without injuſtice to our Courts of Judicature omit to mention the great Credit and Support given to theſe good Magiſtrates on a late Occaſion, in a Cauſe of the utmoſt Conſequence

to Virtue and Reformation. The Wicked were aſſembled in great Numbers to carry off the infamous Offender in triumph, had the Cauſe gone in her Favour; and they would have had good reaſon for it; it would have been a great Victory on the ſide of Vice, and a terrible Diſcouragement to the good Meaſures that have of late been carrying on with ſo much Vigour. But the iſſue of this cauſe has let the Wicked ſee, that the Magiſtrate will be ſupported in his good Endeavours for the ſuppreſſion of Vice and Immorality. And we may now hope that neither he, nor the honeſt Informer, will be weary of well-doing; and that theſe Societies will be able ſucceſsfully to purſue their blow, and ſuppreſs in great Meaſure thoſe diſorderly Houſes to which they have of late given ſo much Diſturbance. This, I apprehend, is a point of greateſt Conſequence towards a thorough Reformation. For were there no ſuch Houſes for the Vicious to reſort to, Vice would be driven from its ſtrong Holds, the Confederacies of the Wicked could not be carried on, they muſt diſſolve and diſperſe; and then ſuch Numbers of our Youth could not fall into their Nets; in a Word, infinite Evils would be prevented by the ſuppreſſion of them. For theſe Places are the Nurſeries of all kinds of Impiety and Vice, the Harbours of lewd Women, who would not ſwarm as they do in our Streets, if they had not theſe Places to retreat to; the Receptacles of Sharpers, Thieves, Gameſters, Bullies, and what not. Nothing is to be ſeen or heard in them but profane Curſing and Swearing, Lewdneſs of all kinds, Drinking, Gaming, Cheating, Fighting; nothing but what

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tends to the Deſtruction of Eſtate and Health, Parts and Reputation, to make a diſtemper'd Body, and infeeble and enervate the Mind, and render it inſenſible to every thing that is wiſe or good; nothing in ſhort but what tends to the Ruin of the whole Man, Body and Soul, here and hereafter. Theſe Houſes are the Ruin of our Youth in all views whatever, the rendevous of all Vices, and mere Hells upon Earth. If theſe therefore could be effectually ſuppreſſed, a very conſiderable Reformation might be hoped for. If the Laws in Being are found inſufficient for that purpoſe, there is no room to doubt, but that any other good Laws on a proper application might be obtained

In the mean time it muſt needs be the deſire of all virtuous and ſerious Men, that thoſe who are engaged in this good Work, would go on with an undaunted Spirit, ſince it is the Cauſe of God and their Country, and give ſuch a continual diſturbance to the wicked peace of thoſe Places, that thoſe who keep them, as well as thoſe who reſort to them, may be wearied out, and forced to quit them, in deſpair of finding their Account in them, and unable longer to bear the extreme uneaſineſs they are perpetually expoſed to. For one can never expect ſuch abandon'd Wretches will leave off, till they are made to feel 'tis more for their Intereſt to do ſo, than to go on. And this, I hope, is a point not to be deſpaired of; a ſucceſſion of Puniſhments coming thick upon one another, if a lewd Houſe be inceſſantly purſued by the Hand of Juſtice, till it is either abandon'd or reformed, will break the Hearts of the moſt obſtinate Offenders, and force them either

to leave their Houſes, or their wicked Courſes. Could this be done, were no Peace, no Truc, no reſt allowed to theſe wicked Places, numbers of young People would be ſaved, who are daily and hourly ruined by them. I can't therefore but hope this good Work will be ſteadily purſued, it being, as I have already obſerved, of much more conſequence towards the ſuppreſſion of Vice, than the taking up Night-Walkers and the lewd Women that infeſt our Streets; tho' that alſo is extremly uſeful: They are moſt of them but retainers to theſe Houſes, there they are firſt entred, there maintained. They value little a Confinement for a few Days in a Houſe of Correction; after a while it grows familiar to them; they find themſelves in Company like themſelves; neither the Labour nor the Puniſhment are many times ſo ſevere as they ſhould be; Credit they have none to loſe, and their Profeſſion after a little Practice of it, makes them proof againſt all the ordinary Marks of Infamy; and when their Confinement is at an end, they know where they ſhall be received, and when in thoſe Places, *Glory in their Shame.* Such Women, I fear, are generally ſpeaking, paſt reclaiming; all one can hope for, is by a ſevere and ſteady proſecution to recover young Offenders, and deter others from the ſame vile Courſes. For all Sinners had their Beginnings in Vice, and there was a Time when the moſt profligate might have proved quite other Creatures, and perhaps had been ſo, if a ſtrict Hand had been held over ſuch Offenders, which would have diſcouraged others from treading in their ſteps, ſince they would have had ſo little hopes of ſinning with impunity.

BUT after all that the moſt vigilant Magiſtrates, or the zeal of theſe Societies can do, tho' armed with the beſt Laws, and countenanced by the higher Powers; it muſt be confeſt all this is too little to bring about the deſired Reformation. Vice, notwithſtanding all the Difficulties that can be thrown in its way, does abound in a degree ſcarce credible in a civilized and Chriſtian Country, and will continue to do ſo, till a Way can be found to prevent Faults, as well as to puniſh the Commiſſion of them. When People are ſo corrupted and debauched as to come under publick Cenſures, there is very little hopes of making ſuch good Men, and ſtill leſs of making them good Women. Vice will abound till the Evil can be cured in its ſource. Beſides, there are many branches of Impiety and Wickedneſs don't come within the Compaſs of theſe Societies, whoſe chief Buſineſs it is to ſuppreſs Lewdneſs and Debauchery in the younger Sort, and that among the lower People; whereas the times abound with crying Sins of all ſorts, and in People of almoſt all Ranks; Villanies the moſt execrable fill our Streets, and no Puniſhments have been able to leſſen the Number of capital Offences. Which makes it highly our concern to enquire, whence this increaſe of Wickedneſs proceeds, and to find out if we can the true cauſes of it, which is abſolutely neceſſary in order to a cure.

AND this, ſome think, is the natural produce of a long Peace; and that, no doubt, is ſomething, but far from being the whole cauſe. Others think it in great Meaſure owing to the Lenity and Mercy of the Government; which has ſhewn great Lenity in changing Death for many

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Offences into Tranſportation, from whence many return before their time; but whoever does ſo, returns with a Halter about his Neck; which makes ſuch Men ſtick at no Wickedneſs, ſince in the eye of the Law they can't be in a worſe Condition than they are already. The great Mercy of the Government has been ſeen in the general Goal Deliveries lately made of inſolvent Debtors. A Goal is not a place to learn Honeſty and Probity in; and therefore when Men are let looſe, who have long lain there, it is not much to be expected, they ſhould have Virtue enough to reſtrain them from the evil courſes their Poverty tempts them to. But theſe can be but partial Cauſes of that inundation of Vice that is ſo juſtly complained of.

THE immediate general cauſe of moſt Villanies is certainly the extreme Miſery and Poverty great Numbers are reduced to; but whence comes this Miſery and Poverty? Come they not from a want of honeſt Induſtry, and of an early Education in the Principles of Piety and Virtue? The want of this has made Men vicious, and Vice has made them poor. Till this defect therefore is cured, till proper care is taken to educate the Children and Youth of the Nation in Virtue and a ſenſe of Religon, all endeavours towards a Reformation will fall very ſhort of what is aimed at. And this indeed the chief Perſons concerned in theſe Societies have not been wanting in. They have taken great Pains, and been at much Expence, in Conjunction with other worthy Men, to propagate Chriſtian Knowledge by diſtributing very great Numbers of pious and good Books, adapted to the Capacities of

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thoſe they are deſigned for; and by the ſetting up and encouraging great Numbers of Charity-Schools. Which Schools, notwithſtanding ſome ſpecious Objections made to them, are manifeſtly of ſo great uſe, that a Man muſt want Humanity to be againſt them. If they can be better regulated, that indeed is fit to be conſider'd; and many are begun to be ſo, by employing the Children ſome parts of the day in Labour and Work, and by not carrying them too far into Learning, ſo as to make them above the Buſineſs of low Life, which Nature deſigned them for.

But the endeavours of this ſort, tho' extremely uſeful, are confined to the poorer People, and therefore tho' they ſhould ſucceed here to their wiſh, 'tis going but a little Way, whilſt the education of the reſt of the Nation is ſo much neglected. Beſides, this want of Education in others either obſtructs or defeats the ſucceſs of their endeavours here. For as long as Vice is predominant, ill Examples and the temptations to Sin will be ſo numerous, that the inferior Sort will not long be able to hold out, and retain their firſt Virtue. There is a ſtrange contagion in ill Examples, which is greatly increaſed by the Pleaſure ill Men take in making others as wicked as themſelves, and in putting every thing that is virtuous and ſerious out of countenance. This makes young People think it manly to be vicious, and that they never appear more like Gentlemen, than when in reality they act like Brutes.

One can never enough lament the ill Education, or rather want of Education in our *Engliſh* Youth, what a figure they make when they come into the World, in what manner they

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ſpend their time, and what little Service their Country can expect from them. Indeed our Schools themſelves are in the general on a ſad Foot, and highly deſerve the Conſideration of the Legiſlature, how to render them more uſeful; that the Time which is now employed for many years, and a great Expence, to learn nothing, or what to the greateſt part will never be of any uſe, may be ſpent in forming their Minds and Manners to the beſt Advantage, by inſtilling early into them ſuch Elements and Principles of uſeful Knowledge and ſolid Virtue, as will make them hate Idleneſs, and deteſt Vice, as a mean unmanly thing, and inſpire them both with a Capacity and an Ambition of being ſerviceable to their Country in thoſe Stations of Life, which ſhall by Providence be allotted to them.

But the Reformation even of our Schools is not enough, if we don't trace this Evil higher up. The great and fundamental Fault of all is in what is done at home. * In former times, Parents governed their Children with ſo ſtrict a Hand, as if they thought they could not keep them at too great a diſtance, in order to preſerve the Authority which Nature and Reaſon give them, and ſecure more effectually the Obedience of their Children. Which method, it muſt be owned, has its Inconveniencies. But if they over-did it, and carried their Severity too far, certain it is the preſent Age is gone into the oppoſite extreme; and they ſeem to think they can't indulge their Children too much, or make them Men and Women too ſoon,

* What follows was omitted in the Preaching for want of time.

ſoon, which in Fact has had, and in the reaſon of Things can't but have very ill Conſequences. They will neither keep their Children in any awe or order themſelves, nor ſuffer it in any Body elſe, and then wonder, their Children prove good for nothing, that they are Ignorant and ill manner'd, expenſive and extravagant, and hurried by their Paſſions into all ſorts of vicious Pleaſures; and in the end prove a Plague and a Curſe, inſtead of being a Comfort and a Bleſſing to them. And thoſe who make ſuch ill Parents, it can't be expected ſhould be good Maſters; they keep but a very looſe Hand over their Servants, and over their Apprentices none at all, for it is to Perſons in Trade I am now ſpeaking, none at all I mean with reſpect to Virtue and Religion, as if they lookt on them as perſonal Affairs, in which they had neither any Right nor Intereſt to meddle: So little Senſe have they of the Duty they owe to God, or of what belongs to the Character they bear, and is incumbent on them as Maſters and Heads of Families, whoſe miſbehaviour with reſpect both to God and Men they are anſwerable for, ſo far as it is owing to the want of due Care and good Government in them who are ſet over them. But if Maſters of Families can be ſo inſenſible of their Duty to God, yet one would hope, mere Humanity and good Nature would prompt them to take ſome care of the Virtue of thoſe they take into their Families; whoſe good or ill Succeſs, when they are grown up and come into the World, they can't but know, depends on the Education they had, and the Habits they contracted while under their Direction. But could Men

be ſo void both of Piety and Humanity, as to have no regard to God, or to the Welfare of thoſe committed to their Care, yet Men could not, one would think, be ſo inſenſible of their own Intereſt, as not to ſee, that themſelves ſhall be better ſerved by thoſe, who have a Senſe of Religion, and are taught to ſerve God; that ſuch will be more honeſt and faithful to them, more diligent and induſtrious, and in all reſpects more uſeful, than thoſe whoſe Education is totally neglected, and all ſorts of ill habits are ſuffered to grow up in them. But theſe Conſiderations ſeem to have little weight with them, they deſire nothing of their Apprentices but to do their Buſineſs, for the reſt they give themſelves little Trouble, and leave them to their Liberty, to do what they pleaſe. They expect them to do the Buſineſs of the Day, and give the neceſſary Attendance then; but when that is over, the Night is their own. And how is it ſpent? innocently or uſefully at home? I doubt not. They ſee their Maſters commonly ſpend their Evenings abroad, and they think they have a right to follow their Example. Well, they are abroad too, but where? will it be in good Company? Will young People left to themſelves ſhun ill Examples, and flee Temptations? Will they deny themſelves all vicious Pleaſures or Diverſions, when Nature prompts, and Opportunity ſerves, and they are free from all Reſtraints? Theſe Queſtions need no Anſwer; infinite Numbers of young People are ruined by their Vices, and this neglect in their Maſters is the chief Cauſe of it. But in the Beginning it was not ſo; in former times Maſters, to ſay nothing of their Servants, looked upon their

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Apprentices as their Children, and thought themſelves anſwerable for their moral Character, ſo far as could be done by ſetting them a good Example, by a prudent Government and watchful Eye over them, and by keeping them under proper reſtraints and within due bounds. But how is the face of things changed? As ſoon as the Shop is ſhut, and the Buſineſs of the Day is over, the little Family-Society is for that time as it were diſſolved; the Maſter goes one way, and the Apprentices another, and with them the young Maſters, if of Age enough to keep them Company, and perhaps are no more heard of till next Morning; the Maſter at leaſt knows nothing of the matter. Which is one very great Inconvenience ariſing from the neglect of Family-Religion, (to ſay nothing at preſent of the Impiety of ſuch an irreligious Cuſtom) this would every Night call all the Family together; and then the Maſter would ſee who are within, and in what Condition they appear, and when within, has it in his Power to keep them ſo. But perhaps this neglect in the Maſter is in ſome Meaſure obviated by the more prudent and more virtuous Conduct of the Miſtreſs of the Houſe; ſhe ſtays frugally at Home, while the Maſter is laviſhing away the Subſtance of the Family abroad; her preſence is ſome reſtraint upon the Children at leaſt, upon them ſhe keeps a watchful Eye, and that preſerves ſome order.

But Maſters are not content to ſpend their Evenings almoſt conſtantly from Home, to the manifeſt prejudice of their Families, in which how much they differ from their Anceſtors, is evident from the infinite increaſe of Pub-

lick Houſes, which is a great Reproach to them, and indeed to the whole Nation; it is come to that paſs, that now great Numbers are abſent from their Houſes, two, three, and ſometimes four Nights together, to divert themſelves at their Country Houſes, perhaps with their Wives, but often without their Children; which is practiſed by ſo many, and for ſo great a part of the Year, that it is become a matter of infinite ill conſequence, and deſerves the moſt ſerious Conſideration of this great City. I don't enquire now, how the Maſters of Families ſpend this time, or how expenſive this method of Life is in many reſpects, or how much is loſt in Trade that would otherwiſe have been got, or how much time is by this means taken from their Books, and Accompts, and Correſpondencies, which are the Life of Trade; the frequent Bankrupcies do but too evidently ſpeak theſe Evils; but what I would beg to be conſidered is, the influence this Practice will have upon that part of the Family that is left in Town. How will they ſpend this time? Will not the Men and Maid-Servants, from the great Opportunities this gives them to be idle, be apt either to fall into intrigues with one another, or to look out for Companions abroad, and to ſpend both their own and Maſters ſubſtance in Drinking, Gaming, or other expenſive Follies? Will not Opportunity and Idleneſs, and a Freedom from all inſpection, tempt them to things they would not otherwiſe have once thought of? Are Perſons of that low Rank fit to be truſted to themſelves? Such People may have diſcretion, if not Virtue enough, to withſtand little Pleaſures, or which can't be indulged with-

without much Difficulty, but does it follow, they will not yield to greater Temptations, when nothing hinders?

But if Servants ſhould behave better in the abſence of the Maſter, becauſe more advanced in Years, and therefore have had more experience to teach them a right conduct; ſhould they, I ſay, behave better, tho' I think it is certain they will not, what will become of the grown Children and Apprentices, who are young and giddy and unthinking, and can never in this Town want Temptations, if they have Opportunities? Will they deny themſelves, will they ſteadily reſiſt the ſollicitations of ill Company? Will they be able to deſpiſe the allurements to falſe Pleaſures which ſurround them on every ſide? Will not their own Paſſions, their own corrupt Nature, when unreſtrained, hurry them into a compliance with all Temptations? Will not their Paſſions be inflamed by lewd Plays, for which freſh Proviſion is made by the erection of a new Theatre, contrived as it were on purpoſe, by the Situation of it, to corrupt the Morals of thoſe, who of all People ought to be the laſt, that ſhould be ſuffered to have a taſte of ſuch Pleaſures, and kept up in defiance of all Authority; but which, it is to be hoped, will ſoon be demoliſhed by the Superior Power of the Legiſlature. Will not, I ſay, the Paſſions of young People be eaſily inflamed by a lewd Stage, and will not the tranſition from thence be eaſy to lewd Women? But when a reliſh of any of theſe Vices is begun, who can tell where it will end, or what unhappy Conſequences it may be attended with? But if the *Saturday* Night

Night be ſpent in any of theſe vicious Pleaſures, what may we expect will be the Buſineſs of the *Sunday*? Will they be careful to go to Church, or to any place of religious Worſhip, to give God the Honour due to him, and to be inſtructed in the Duties of Religion; and ſpend the reſt of the Day in a ſerious way, in endeavours to improve their Minds by the reading of pious and good Books, or in virtuous and good Company, and among near Relations and Family-friends? I fear not; many of them will think of nothing elſe but how to ſpend the Day in the idleſt and moſt uſeleſs manner poſſible; others, in Imitation of the Example ſet them by their Maſters, will think it a Day loſt, if they don't make an Excurſion into the Country, to make an idle Viſit to ſome Acquaintance, or perhaps to ſpend the Day in ſome Tippling Houſe. The Skirts of the Town on a *Sunday* Morning, in tolerable Weather, are as crowded with Sights of this kind, as if People were poſting to ſome Fair or Market; a moſt ſcandalous Sight, and a very great Indication of the diſſoluteneſs of our Manners, and Remiſneſs of Family-Government. How is the Face of this City changed in this reſpect from what it was in former times, when the Maſter and Miſtreſs, Children, Apprentices and Servants, went in a Body to the Houſe of God to worſhip him to whom they owe their Being, and from whom alone they can expect Happineſs either in this World or in the next. They very ſeldom miſt Church, but ſo great is the Change, that many now ſeldomer go to it; which neglect of divine Worſhip can't fail to be of extreme

treme ill Conſequence. It is of as much Importance it ſhould be remedied, as it is to beget and preſerve in the Minds of young People a fear of God and a Senſe of Religion; which nothing can keep up in any tolerable degree, but a regular and ſerious Obſervation of the Lord's Day. This is ſo evident, that I think, it is denied by none, and therefore I need not in Proof of it obſerve, that almoſt every Malefactor, whom his Sins have brought to an infamous and untimely end, dates from hence the beginning of his ruin.

THIS is a fault which theſe Societies indeed have it not in their Power to cure, tho' their endeavours towards it are not wanting; but the Law has provided a pretty effectual Remedy for it, if the proper Officers would do their Duty; for it is expreſly enacted, *That every Perſon who ſhall not reſort to his Church or ſome place of publick Worſhip upon every Sunday, having no lawful or reaſonable excuſe to be Abſent, ſhall forfeit for every ſuch Offence Twelve pence, to be levied by the Church-Wardens of the Pariſh where ſuch Offence ſhall be done, to the uſe of the Poor of the ſame Pariſh.* The time can be remembred when the Zeal of Officers in this point was very great; but when was it? When the Penal Laws were in force, and they could indulge the cruel Pleaſure of worrying a Number of poor People of ſcrupulous Conſciences, who had no other Crime they could be charged with but a deſire of ſerving God in their own way. But ſuch is the Perverſeneſs of a wrong Zeal, that if we can't force Men to come to Church, we don't care what becomes of them; they may abſent

abſent themſelves from our Worſhip as long and as often as they will, provided they go to no other; we are eaſy in not having God ſerved at all, rather than it ſhould be in a way we don't like; tho' the not ſerving him, the not going to ſome place of publick Worſhip, muſt neceſſarily end in diſſerving him, in groſs Irreligion and Immorality, and all the ill Effects of them. I can't but wonder at the Remiſneſs of Pariſh-Officers in this part of their Duty, ſince if they were vigorous and active in it, they would either bring People to a religious Attendance on the Service of God, or by the Penalty incurred by their neglect, conſiderably eaſe their Pariſhes in their Taxes. This laſt Motive I ſhould think would have no little weight with them, ſince 'tis certain the Poors Rates in moſt places are very heavy, and every Day grow more ſo.

BUT to proceed. If Maſters of Families can be unconcerned for their Servants or Apprentices conſidered by themſelves, it might, as I have ſaid, be expected they would not be ſo for their own ſakes; they muſt be very unthinking not to conſider how much themſelves do or may ſuffer by it. How often have Houſes, in the abſence of the Maſters, been robbed or burnt thro' the careleſneſs and negligence of Servants, which had been prevented had the Maſter's Eye been upon them? How often have Houſes been robbed by Perſons in confederacy with Servants, and ſometimes ſet on Fire to conceal the Robbery? And whence comes this great Iniquity, how came they to have Minds ſo corrupt as to be capable of ſuch horrid Villanies? is it not from being

being left to themſelves? for want of Inſpection, for want of Inſtruction, for want of a Senſe of Religion being inſtilled early into them? and is not this chiefly the fault of Parents and Maſters?

But if none of theſe terrible Effects ſhould follow upon this neglect and abſence of the Maſters, is not time loſt, is not Induſtry ſlackened, are not Habits of Idleneſs contracted, are not Opportunities thrown into their Hands of indulging every vicious Inclination? are they not expoſed to the greateſt Danger of being ſeduced by ill Company, and drawn into ſinful Pleaſures, which when once taſted, perhaps they will never leave? Is not all Vice expenſive? Does not their Health ſuffer by it? Is not a Diſtemper very often contracted, the remains of which will perhaps always ſtick by them? For is it not common for young People in ſuch Caſes, partly for Secrecy, and partly as they think to ſave Expence, to throw themſelves into the Hands of ignorant Pretenders, by which means their Conſtitution is oftentimes irreparably ruined? And what Service, what Induſtry or Care can Maſters expect from thoſe who are thus vitiated both in Body and Mind? But if the Caſe ſhould not prove ſo bad, the bare expence of vicious Pleaſures, eſpecially if Gaming makes a part of them, as generally it does, is too great for the Circumſtances of ſuch Perſons to ſupport: And what is the next thing? Why, to cheat and ſteal and rob; to have wherewith to anſwer their Expences, and pay the Debts their fatal Pleaſures have drawn them into. Has it not been ſaid, that even Confederacies have been

formed by a Number of vicious young People, to make a Bank as it were of their Maſters Caſh, to carry on, and at the ſame time conceal one another's Extravagancies? which could not have happened, if Maſters truſted their Servants leſs, and inſpected into their Affairs themſelves, and ſpent more of that time at Home, which, to ſay no worſe of it, is in ſo uſeleſs a manner trifled away in other Places. 'Tis in vain to talk of the Decay of Trade, or to complain of the increaſe of Vice, while private Families are ſo ill governed, and Luxury and Idleneſs take the place of Frugality and Induſtry. There lies the Root of the Evil, and till that is removed, all that either Magiſtrates or theſe Societies can do, is comparatively little. You may weed a piece of ill Ground as long as you will; if you can't cure the Soil, and remove the Cauſe, new Weeds will ſpring up, as faſt as the old ones are pulled out. And ſo it is here, while private Families are ſo ill-managed, and Maſters take ſo little care of the Education of thoſe under them, there will unavoidably ſpring from thence an univerſal diſſoluteneſs and corruption of Manners. We feel the Effects, and ſee the cauſe, and therefore inſtead of thinking it ſtrange that the one ſubſiſts while the other does ſo, if we were wiſe, if we had any concern for our ſelves or our Country, for the honour of God, and the happineſs of our Brethren, if we had any regard to our own worldly Intereſt, if we really wiſhed the proſperity of our Families, or to be happy in our Children, we ſhould ſet ourſelves in earneſt to mend Faults that are become ſo epidemical; we ſhould return to the grave, regular, orderly, ſober me-

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thod of Life, which this great City has in former times been ſo juſtly renowned for, and ſhew we are ſenſible, that good domeſtick Diſcipline and Government are abſolutely neceſſary to preſerve Honeſty, Frugality, and Induſtry, and the other Virtues which are the true Foundations of Society.

If this Care was ever neceſſary, it is ſo now, not only from the great increaſe of Profaneſs and Immorality, and the terrible effects we feel, (and more we have reaſon to apprehend from them) but from the prodigious increaſe of the Town, which is become in ſome ſort the whole Kingdom, ſuch vaſt Numbers from all Parts conſtantly reſort to it. If this part therefore be infected, no other will long remain ſound; the plague of Vice will from this Centre ſoon diffuſe it ſelf into all parts, and indeed has already done ſo. The numbers that Annually flock hither, will not upon their return be likely to leave the Vices of the Town behind them. It has been an obſervation of Wiſe-Men, that the Virtue of a People is often owing to their ignorance of Vice; and in this happy Ignorance many parts of the Kingdom would in great Meaſure have ſtill remained, had they not from hence been furniſhed with the fatal Knowledge of it. But thoſe who can't be prevailed on to reform their Families from a ſenſe of their own Intereſt, will, I'm afraid, be little moved by telling them how much the whole Kingdom ſuffers by it; tho' that it does ſo, is undeniable.

For thoſe who come into the World with Minds ſo corrupt, will be impatient of all reſtraint, and an univerſal Licentiouſneſs of Man-

ners will unavoidably prevail. To oblige Men thus educated to act a reaſonable part, is to intrench upon their Liberty; they have been ſuffer'd while Children and in their younger Years, to do what they would, and will you not permit them to do ſo ſtill? What do you tell them of Laws or Religion, of their Duty to God or their Country, they will tell you, they are their own Maſters? and they never think themſelves to be ſo, but when they aſſume a Liberty of doing ſomething very unreaſonable, unmanly, and abſurd; they are Slaves to the worſt of Maſters, vicious and head-ſtrong Paſſions, while they endeavour to aſſert their Freedom from the reſtraints of Reaſon, and of Law which is founded in Reaſon, and from the Obligations of the moſt reaſonable Religion. It is in truth come to that paſs, that Licentiouſneſs has taken the place and name of Liberty, and nothing is thought Liberty, which does not leave Men an unreſtrained Power of ſaying and doing what they pleaſe, at leaſt in every thing relating to themſelves. *Reaſonable* Liberty is a Language they don't underſtand; Liberty in their opinion, ceaſes to be ſo, the minute it comes under rules and limitations. But all wiſe and ſober Men ſee how abſurd this is; they know that true *Liberty* is the middle between two extremes, as indeed all Virtues are, *Licentiouſneſs* on one hand, and *Servitude* on the other. But for ſuch who won't underſtand what *reaſonable* Liberty means, or how it differs from *Licentiouſneſs*, ſhould be made to know what *legal* Liberty is, and that no Man has a right to more or other Liberty, than the Laws of the Society allow of which he is a Member, ſuppoſing them to be juſt

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and righteous Laws; which is but a reaſonable Suppoſition, eſpecially where the People themſelves are the Law-makers, ſo that nothing can be a Law without their own conſent. And I muſt add, that that is not *legal* Liberty, or the Liberty the Laws intend, which perhaps keeps within the letter of the Law, if it manifeſtly violates the intention of it: For it will often ſo fall out, that the Intention of the Law ſhall be very clear and plain; and yet it may be ſo worded, that a Man who greatly offends againſt it, may be ſafe from Puniſhment. For ſuch is the Corruption of humane Nature, that a reſtraining Law is no ſooner made, but evil-minded Men ſet their Heads to work, to find out an Evaſion; and 'tis exceeding difficult in many Caſes to word a Law ſo, as to preclude all room for ſuch Artifices; which is one great Reaſon why Laws don't better anſwer their end, and produce the good Effects expected from them. Such a Practice therefore is not uſing a *legal* Liberty, but is a manifeſt Abuſe of it, and is really *Licentiouſneſs*, however it may cover it ſelf from the Letter of the Law.

For every one to do what is right in his own Eyes, which the preſent Generation are ſo fond of, is the Character of times, when there was no Government; in thoſe Days *There was no King in Iſrael, every Man did that which was right in his own Eyes.* But where there is a King, where there are Laws, and Magiſtrates inveſted with Authority to put them in Execution, there is an end of all pretence to ſuch an unreſtrained Liberty. In truth, Licentiouſneſs is ſo far from being Liberty, that it has a natural

tural and direct tendency to ſubvert and deſtroy it. So Reaſon ſhews it muſt be; ſo Hiſtory tells us, that in fact it often has been; why then ſhould we flatter our ſelves, that the ſame Cauſe will not now alſo, if ſuffered to go on, produce the ſame Effect? There is the ſame reaſon for reſtraining Liberty in the Subject as there is for limiting Power in the Prince; for unbounded Liberty is an unbounded Power of doing what they pleaſe. But ſuch a Power, in whatever Hands, whether in the Governours or governed, is from the Perverſeneſs of humane Nature, too apt to be abuſed. We all ſeem ſenſible enough of this, if the Prince ſtretches the Prerogative, or attempts to ſet himſelf in any inſtance above the Laws: But is not an unlimited Power in the People, a boundleſs Liberty to do what they will, equally dangerous to the Welfare of a Nation, and inconſiſtent with its ſafety? Had a Prince the Virtue of *Jupiter*, ſays *Ariſtotle*, it would be fit he ſhould have his Power too, which is in Effect ſaying, that ſince he has not one, it is not fit he ſhould have the other. But if Power ought to be proportioned to Virtue, it is for the ſame Reaſon not fit to give the People ſo much Power as to leave them wholly to themſelves, ſince they have not Virtue enough to be truſted with it. For firſt it is giving them a full Liberty to ruine themſelves, which all wiſe and good Governments ſhould prevent as much as poſſible; and in the next place, no Member of the Community can ſuffer ſingly, his ruin will draw that of others after it; and if Numbers run into the like abuſe of Liberty, the Commu-

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nity muſt in proportion ſuffer by it. Its Riches and Strength are not only ſo much impaired, by which it ſhould defend it ſelf againſt foreign Force; it is in great Danger from within, from the Factions and Diviſions which vicious Men in Diſtreſs are always ready to foment.

But we need not much reaſoning to prove a point, that ſpeaks itſelf. Licentiouſneſs every where prevails, and we feel the ſad effects of it; it has produced ſuch a diſſoluteneſs of Manners, ſuch a Luxury in all parts of Life, and all Ranks of People, ſuch a diſregard to the duties of Religion, ſuch a contempt of all Authority, whether Sacred or Civil, as was never before known in this Nation: And there is no danger we have not reaſon to apprehend from it; eſpecially ſince this great Licentiouſneſs of Manners is accompanied by a no leſs Licentiouſneſs of the Preſs, and Men are confirmed in ill Practices by the moſt barefaced endeavours to corrupt their Principles, that the remains of Conſcience, and a Fear of the Puniſhment threatned to the Wicked in the Scriptures, may not make them uneaſy in their Sins, and at ſome time or other bring them to Repentance. Infidelity is propagated with the greateſt Induſtry, and Religion treated as a mere Impoſture, an impoſition upon Mankind, that is not only uſeleſs, but if you will believe them, hurtful and pernicious. The Licentiouſneſs of this kind has been many Years growing upon us, but a love of Liberty would not let Men timely ſee what was aimed at. In the mean time the Promoters of Infidelity felt their way ſtep by ſtep, and tryed from time to time, what the Nation would bear; every ſtep they took was but

in order to a bolder, and now the mask is thrown aſide, and they plainly tell us what it is they have been ſo long deſigning.

'Tis not now Superſtition or Popery, modern Doctrines and human Inventions or Additions, Perſecution or Prieſtcraft, that are the Subjects of their Satyrs and Invectives; theſe were preparations only to a greater Work, and in order to undermine Chriſtianity itſelf. While they were declaiming againſt Popery and Prieſtcraft, they pretended great eſteem and reverence for the Scriptures and the Doctrines contained in them, for Chriſt and his Apoſtles, and the firſt Ages of the Church, and for thoſe who in earneſt followed the Example of their great Maſter. But now they think they want none of theſe Covers; now they openly attack the Chriſtian Inſtitution itſelf; it is ridiculed, reviled, traduced in a manner that exceeds every thing we find in its Pagan Adverſaries, and was never before ſuffer'd in any Chriſtian Country. The Scriptures are treated with the utmoſt Contempt, the charge of Prieſtcraft is brought down to Chriſt himſelf and his Apoſtles, or they are repreſented as mere Enthuſiaſts; Prophecies and Miracles, the Foundations of the Goſpel, are exploded as being themſelves without Foundation; even the Morality of the Goſpel, does not eſcape their bold Cenſure; all is Forgery, Impoſture or Enthuſiaſm; the very word *Faith*, is not to be born, as if inconſiſtent with Reaſon and Senſe; in ſhort, all *Revelation* is *Fiction*, God can't make one if he would, and if he could, it would be to no purpoſe, of no uſe or ſervice to Mankind. *Is thy Servant a Dog that he ſhould do this?* So would theſe Men

ſay, ſo in effect did they ſay, when they were at firſt charged with theſe black Deſigns, and it was foretold they would do, what they ſince have done. But it was neceſſary to obſerve Meaſures for a time, and to diſſemble all they could their true meaning, till the Minds of the People were gradually prepared for it. We ſee now with what view ſuch bitterneſs has been expreſt againſt the Clergy, why it has been ſo warmly inſiſted on, that Religion was a mere perſonal thing, which the State had nothing to do with, and that all Authority in religious Matters has been denied to reſide any where, either in Church or State. *Shall I not viſit for theſe things? ſaith the Lord; ſhall not my Soul be avenged on ſuch a Nation as this?* But I hope a merciful God will not impute theſe crying Sins to the whole Nation; and that a handful of Men only in compariſon of the whole, are guilty of them. But if the Nation would not have this Guilt imputed to them, they ſhould ſhew their juſt reſentment of it, and look on theſe Advocates of Infidelity as their worſt Enemies, as perſons, whoſe Principles, of all others, do moſt deſerve the hatred and abhorrence of all wiſe and good Men. For who can be greater Enemies to any Government, than thoſe who would ſet the People free from the reſtraint Religion puts upon them? Or how can Society ſubſiſt, if publick and private Faith, which are the cement of it, are deſtroyed? What ſecurity can the Prince have for the Fidelity and Allegiance of the Subject? What confidence can Subjects have in one another? What will become of the peace and order of private

Families? What dependence can there be on filial Obedience, or upon the honeſty of Servants? What bond will there be left for the Fidelity of the Marriage-Bed? Will they tell us, that the power of the Magiſtrate and the authority of the Law, is ſufficient for theſe purpoſes; that we are ſafe in them, and want not the additional reſtraints of Religion? But not to inſiſt that the wiſeſt Men in all times have been of another Opinion, it is from the Reaſon and Nature of things demonſtrable, that all obligation to humane Laws ultimately terminates in the Belief of a God, who will reward every Man according to his Works, and that no ſcheme of Morality or Government can ſubſiſt without it; ſo that Irreligion, could it prevail and be embraced upon Principle, would in reality be a diſſolution of all Government, of all Commerce and Society, and throw a Nation into the utmoſt Confuſion. The Men therefore that endeavour this, deſerve the publick odium, more than Murderers or Incendiaries, more than thoſe who would bring on us the greateſt Evils or the worſt of Plagues.

But did it in Theory appear poſſible, that the Laws of a Country, and the Authority of the Magiſtrate could ſupply the place of God and Religion; are not as many Engines at work to deſtroy the Authority of the Prince, as have endeavoured to take away the Reverence due to God? Is not Civil Authority as much inſulted as Sacred? Is not a Prince, who in himſelf, in his Royal Conſort, in his Children, deſerves the Eſteem, the Admiration, the Affection, the

Hearts

Hearts of his People, treated with the utmoſt Indignity? Are not his Perſonal Virtues denied, or ſhamefully miſ-repreſented? Are not his publick Meaſures traduced? Are not his Miniſters libelled in ſo infamous a manner, as if to be a Servant to the King, and in the Intereſt of one's Country, were things incompatible? Sedition and Treaſon under very thin Covers are diſperſed with the greateſt Induſtry thro' the whole Nation; and it ſeems to be the ſole Employment of ſome Men to weaken the Authority of the Crown, and deſtroy all the Reſpect and Reverence due to the Majeſty of the Prince that wears it. Let the Patrons of Infidelity, before they perſwade us that the reſtraints of Religion are uſeleſs and unneceſſary, inſtead of weakening the Authority of the Prince, and villifying his Government, ſhew themſelves good Subjects, and ready to pay a juſt regard to the Civil Power, and by all proper Arguments endeavour to inforce on others the Obligations due to it. Let them do Juſtice to the Prince they have ſworn Allegiance to, let them acknowledge his ſhining Virtues, and confeſs his Senſe of Honour, his Clemency, his Juſtice, his eager and impatient deſires to eaſe his People, and make them happy: But this is in vain expected of ſuch Men; they that will not give to God the things that are God's, neither will they give to *Cæſar*, the things which are *Cæſar*'s.

I know not whether any thing need be added to increaſe the Horror of this wicked Scheme, that aims at nothing leſs than to extirpate all Religion, and with it all Virtue and Obedience

to Government. But if any thing can add to it, it ſhould be the Conſideration, that while we are thus ruining ourſelves by our Irreligion and Immorality, we have a vigilant and powerful Enemy looking on with Pleaſure, and not only looking on, but adding fuel to the Fire, an Enemy ready to take all advantages againſt us, and ever with inceſſant zeal conſpiring our Deſtruction; for ſuch is the Popiſh Faction, a Faction always reſtleſs and implacable. Great is the Harveſt they have had among us for many Years, and they are daily buſy in making Proſelytes; but a Proſelyte to Popery is from that Minute a ſworn Enemy to every thing that is valuable to us, as Engliſhmen and Proteſtants. Nor is this at all ſtrange; for Irreligion can never be acquieſced in by any Nation, 'tis a State not to be born; and therefore the appearance of it, while it makes ſuch bold advances, and ſhews itſelf ſo openly, frightens great Numbers who have a zeal for God, and drives them into a Communion, where there is ſo much appearance of Piety, and where the Forms of Devotion are kept up in a way that creates great Reverence, and has a wonderful effect upon the common People, who are very apt to miſtake Superſtition for Religion. In ſhort, nothing can advance the Cauſe of Popery more, than the Propagation of Infidelity among us, which by ſome Men is ſo much laboured.

How to remedy this Licentiouſneſs of Manners, theſe Inſults on Religion, how to put a ſtop to the growth of Infidelity, how to preſerve, or rather reſtore to the Civil Powers the Reverence

rence and Eſteem due to them, and retrieve a juſt regard to Authority human and divine, how to defend the Nation from the Dangers theſe things expoſe us to from our Popiſh Adverſaries, it becomes not me to ſay: But till ſomething is done for the remedy of theſe evils, if indeed any thing can be done, and it be not too late to ſtem the Torrent that is breaking in upon us; till more concern is ſhewn for the publick Welfare, till ſome reſpect is paid to Authority, till ſome care is taken of Education, to put it upon a better Foot, till private Families can be prevailed on to regulate themſelves in another manner, till Maſters and Parents will think themſelves obliged to take care of the Morals and Religion of thoſe under their Charge, all that the Magiſtrate or theſe Societies can do will be to little purpoſe. Their Zeal for the Honour of God, their Concern for the good of their Fellow-Creatures, and their Love for their Country, tho' they ſhould continue to enjoy the Happineſs they have at preſent, of wiſe and virtuous, honeſt and uncorrupt Magiſtrates, whoſe Ears will be open to their Complaints, and Hands ready to execute the Laws, will not be able to produce the deſired Reformation, if no other methods be taken towards this good End by thoſe who only have it in their Power. But whatever ſucceſs your Endeavours have, or however they may be ſeconded by others, you have done your Parts, you have the thanks and praiſes of all good Men, and what is ſtill more valuable, the ſatisfaction of good Conſcience, you have been Zealous for

the Honour of the Great GOD; your Cauſe recommends you to the Divine Favour and Protection: He knows thoſe that are his, and will in the end reward your labour of Love and endeavours for his Service, with a bleſſed and glorious Immortality, for the Sake and through the Mediation of his beloved Son, our Lord and Saviour *JESUS CHRIST*; to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be aſcribed all Honour, Glory, and Power, now and ever.

FINIS.

The Six and Thirtieth

ACCOUNT

OF THE

PROGRESS made in the

Cities of *London* and *Weſtminſter*,

And Places adjacent,

By the *Societies* for Promoting a *Reformation of Manners*;

By furthering the Execution of the LAWS againſt Prophaneneſs and Immorality, and by other Chriſtian Methods.

THE Reaſonableneſs of Uniting in Societies for the more effectual carrying on a Work of this Nature, need not be further proved, after what has been ſaid with ſo much Advantage upon that Subject in the *Annual Reformation Sermons*; as alſo by the excellent Author of the *Whole Duty of Man*, who, in his Treatiſe of the *Cauſes of the Decay of Chriſtian Piety*, hath this remarkable Paſſage: *The Scandal*, ſaith he, *brought upon*

Religion, as it was not contracted by the Irregularities of one or two Perſons, but by aſſociated and common Crimes; ſo neither will it be removed by a few ſingle and private Reformations. There muſt be Combinations and publick Confederacies in Virtue, to ballance and counterpoiſe thoſe of Vice, or ſhe will never recover that Honour which ſhe acquired by the general Piety of her Profeſſors.

THANKS be to God, many ſuch Combinations and publick Confederacies are now in Being, who make it a great Part of their Buſineſs to oppoſe aſſociated, as well as particular Offenders.

THE *Societies for Reformation of Manners* are eminently of that Number: And the Uſefulneſs of ſuch Confederacies is viſible from what has been actually brought about by means of the ſaid Societies, far beyond what could have been hoped for from any private Endeavours. Multitudes, for near *Forty Years* laſt paſt, have been proſecuted, and puniſhed according to Law, for lewd and ſcandalous Practices. Great Numbers of Bawdy-Houſes, and other Diſorderly Houſes, have been ſuppreſſed and ſhut up; and the Streets very much purged from the wretched Tribe of *Night-walking Proſtitutes* and moſt *deteſtable Sodomites*. Many young Men, taken with lewd Women, have, by their being brought to timely Shame and

Puniſh-

Puniſhment, been diſcouraged, and turned (as we have reaſon to hope) from following ſuch ſinful Courſes, which often cauſe them to defraud their Parents, Maſters, *&c.* and bring themſelves to utter Ruin. Moreover, many Thouſands of *good Books* have been diſperſed by theſe *Societies* throughout the Kingdom, and put into the Hands of lewd and profane Perſons, to awaken them to a Senſe of their Sins. By theſe various Methods, many Perſons have, by the Bleſſing of GOD, been brought to a Senſe of their Sin and Danger; and tho' they have at firſt been exaſperated againſt the Inſtruments of awakening them out of their dreadful Lethargy, and ſtopping them in their ſinful Courſes; yet have they afterwards bleſſed GOD for their Recovery, and been heartily thankful to thoſe, who had been ſerviceable to them therein.

THIS Undertaking, begun by a very few Perſons, has mightily ſpread it ſelf, not only in *Great Britain*, but in Foreign Parts. And the great Good which, by GOD's Bleſſing, has been done by the ſaid Societies, has very much animated their Endeavours. They likewiſe have been encouraged by ſeveral Royal Proclamations, Orders of Seſſions, Preſentments of Grand-Juries in many Counties in *England*; by the Lord-Mayors and Court of Aldermen of the City of *London*; by many Sermons of the Right Reve-

rend the Biſhops, and other eminent Divines, preached to the Societies, and by the Writings of other learned Men; as alſo by the ſolemn Approbation of a conſiderable Number of Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and the Honourable Judges of *England* and *Ireland*, and the Commiſſioners of ſeveral Proteſtant Churches.

It muſt be confeſſed, That Profaneneſs and Debauchery do very much abound, for Want of a more general and hearty Concurrence in this Work of Perſons of all Orders amongſt us, in Proportion to the Greatneſs of the Concern.

The ſaid Societies have proſecuted, and been aſſiſting in Proſecuting, from the *Firſt* of *December* 1729, to the *Firſt* of *December* 1730, divers ſorts of Offenders, *viz.*

For	Lewd and Diſorderly Practices	251
	Keeping of Bawdy and Diſorderly Houſes	30
	Exerciſing their Trades or Ordinary Callings on the Lord's-Day	424
	Prophane * Swearing and Curſing	22
	Keeping Common Gaming-Houſes, and Gaming	15
	Aſſaulting Conſtables, *&c.* in the Execution of their Office	12

* The late preſcribed Method in the granting of Summons and Warrants againſt prophane Swearers, *&c.* which the Juſtices of the Peace thought themſelves obliged to follow, has rendered the Proſecution of thoſe Offenders more dilatory, which, with ſome other Difficulties occurring the Year paſt, are the Cauſe why ſo few Perſons have been puniſh'd for profane Swearing, *&c.* during that time.

The

THE Total Number of Perſons proſecuted in or near *London* only, for *Debauchery* and *Profaneneſs*, for near 40 Years laſt paſt, are calculated at about 97060.

THEY have alſo been aſſiſting in bringing to Puniſhment ſeveral *Sodomitical Houſes*, as well as divers Perſons for *Sodomy*, and *Sodomitical Practices*, who have been proſecuted by the Direction, and at the Charge of the Government.

IF Impiety and Debauchery had gone on ſpreading and increaſing among us for the laſt *Forty Years*, at that prodigious rate as they did for many Years before, we had aſſuredly been one of the moſt profligate Nations in the World; which muſt probably have reduced us to a very miſerable Condition long before now: Thus by the Bleſſing of GOD upon the various Endeavours that have been uſed by the ſeveral Societies, a great Check hath been given to the Prevalency of the moſt ſcandalous Vices, and in many Inſtances, a viſible alteration has enſued.

THOSE therefore that have a juſt Zeal for the Honour of GOD and Religion; who deſire to prevent the ſpreading of the Leproſie of Sin; who are unwilling to have their Children and other Relations, or their Friends and Servants, corrupted by ill Examples

amples and wicked Allurements: Thoſe that ſincerely wiſh well to thoſe excellent and hopeful Nurſeries of Piety and good Manners, the CHARITY-SCHOOLS; and would be heartily grieved to ſee the Chriſtian Inſtruction and pious Education that Children receive therein, miſcarry, through prevailing open Temptations to Wickedneſs, and a general Contempt of Religion: Thoſe, laſtly, who have any due Love to their Country, and would prevent a National Guilt, and thereby keep off National Judgments, cannot poſſibly, one would think, but heartily approve and aſſiſt this uſeful Deſign for ſuppreſſing Profaneneſs and Immorality.

NOw, Whereas ſome have moſt maliciouſly inſinuated, That it is not *Reformation* which is intended, but the getting of Money from the Delinquents; and by ſuch baſe and vile Reports have impoſed on ſome very well-meaning People: It is hereby declared to the World, That ſuch a Charge upon theſe Societies is abſolutely falſe. It is allowed that there have been ſome baſe and wicked Perſons (not engag'd, or in the leaſt concerned in this Work) who have extorted Money from Offenders, and ſometimes from honeſt Men. But all ſuch Practices are utterly deteſted by theſe Societies,(who, it is well known, have ſtrictly enquired after ſuch

ſuch Perſons, and when diſcovered, have brought them to Puniſhment) nor do they know or believe that any who are engaged with them are chargeable with ſuch vile Practices. And to prevent as much as is poſſible, all Suſpicion of a mercenary Deſign or Principle in any that act in the Buſineſs of *Reformation*, the GENTLEMEN concern'd have all along recommended and inſiſted upon it with their Friends, that thoſe who give Information againſt *Vice* or *Profaneneſs*, ſhould never receive that Part of the Penalty which the Law allows the Informer; and it has not come to their Knowledge, that any ſuch Perſon hath acted otherwiſe. However, if at any Time hereafter it ſhould happen, that any Perſon, or Perſons, concerned in this good Deſign, ſhould be chargeable with any of the evil Practices beforementioned, or even with taking the Reward which the Law allows them; it is humbly requeſted of all that are heartily concerned for the Intereſt of Religion, that they will give Notice thereof to any of the ſaid Societies.

N. B. The Perſons concerned in this Deſign *confine* their Proſecutions to the Offences mention'd in this Account.

AND

AND for the further preventing any Objections from thoſe who are too much diſpoſed to raiſe them, againſt this neceſſary Work, that there is more Regard had to the Puniſhment, than to the Converſion of prophane and vicious Perſons; it may not be improper to acquaint the World: That in Conjunction with the other pious and proper Methods of Inſtruction, Admonition, and Reproof, the number of Books written and publiſhed for thoſe and the like Ends, and given away at their own Charge, are calculated at above Four hundred and twenty Thouſand.

N. B. It muſt ever be moſt thankfully acknowledged by all who wiſh well to Mankind, and the Proſperity of the Government, That the Juſtices of the Peace of the COMMITTEE appointed at the Seſſions of the Peace for the City and Liberty of *Weſtminſter*, for Suppreſſing of the *Night-Houſes* and other *Diſorderly Houſes*, *&c.* have been very inſtrumental in Promoting this good Work, by Puniſhing as well the *Keepers* and *Maintainers* of a great Number of thoſe ſort of Houſes, as alſo of many *Lewd* and *Diſorderly Perſons*.

FINIS.